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RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 7544
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4296
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 2521
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RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 7677
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 9780
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 2499
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 3700
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RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

Key stories in the media:

Major media led with tension between the offices of the Defense Minister and the IDFQs Chief of Staff, following Israel TVQs unconfirmed disclosure that the tenure C-o-S Gabi Ashkenazi would be

extended by one year.

The media reported that the U.S. is moving towards sanctions against Iran. A Yediot headline reads: QThe Entire World vs. Iran.Q PM Benjamin Netanyahu called for crippling sanctions against that country Qright now.Q Israel Radio reported that Iranian FM Manouchehr Mottaki warned Israel against attacking his country.

All media reported that yesterday Michael Oren, IsraelQs Ambassador to the U.S., was heckled by pro-Palestinian protesters at the University of California, Irvine. Deputy FM Daniel Ayalon underwent a similar experience at Oxford University, England. A student shouted QKill the JewsQ at Ayalon.

Based on revelations by PA President Mahmoud Abbas' former corruption-buster, Fahmi Shabaneh, last night Channel 10-TV presented an expose on alleged wide-scale corruption in the PA. In an interview with The Jerusalem Post, Shabaneh, warned that what happened in the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2007, when Hamas managed to overthrow the Fatah-controlled regime, is likely to recur in the West Bank.

Infrastructure Minister Uzi Landau (Yisrael Beiteinu) was quoted as saying in an interview with Israel Hayom: QThere is no difference between Yasser Arafat and Abu Mazen. One is like Jack the Ripper and the other is like the Boston Strangler, each with his own style. One commits his murders in such a way that the blood spatters the walls while the other kills quietly, but the result is the same.

Leading media reported that the disturbances in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Shuafat continued yesterday and today.

HaQaretz quoted Lebanese PM Saad Hariri as saying yesterday that he was worried by Israel's "escalating" threats to neighboring Lebanon and Syria, and that they were a huge mistake. Israel Radio also quoted Hariri as saying that Israel represents a threat to the entire region. In an interview with BBC News, Hariri said Israeli planes enter Lebanese and Syrian air space on a regular basis. Israel Radio quoted a senior Hizbullah official as saying in the Saudi daily Al-Madina that its top operative Imad Mughniyah was killed outside Lebanon and that the group is thus entitled to hit Israeli targets anywhere.

HaQaretz reported that yesterday two hundred fifty Israeli faculty members sent an open letter to the Council of Higher Education Tuesday, calling on it not to recognize Ariel College as either a "university center" or a university.

The media reported that a compromise is expected on the proposed expatriate voting bill.

Yesterday leading media reported that two on Sunday the High Court of Justice ordered the release of two female foreign activists who were arrested in Ramallah the same day. The media reported that Oz, the Qimmigrant police,Q had no right to intervene in the West Bank.

Leading media reported that on Monday senior Palestinian official Nasser al-Kidwa urged the U.S. to make clear that the indirect Mideast peace talks it has proposed will deal with key outstanding issues including borders, settlements, and the status of Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Post and other media reported that yesterday PM Netanyahu, who talked to ambassadors, urged the EU countries to disabuse the Palestinians of the notion that the international community will Qdeliver Israel,Q saying this vain Palestinian hope had led to 10 QwastedQ months.

HaQaretz quoted defense officials as saying that the IDF is not slated to reopen the Karni border crossing between Israel and Gaza in the future. Karni was closed after Hamas took over Gaza in June 2007.

Maariv reported that last Sunday a group of Russian immigrant satirists in Jerusalem sang a song in Hebrew deriding the assassination of the late PM Yitzhak Rabin. The owners of the locale interrupted the show.

Yediot reported that the Qlow chairQ incident involving the

humiliation of Turkish ambassador to Israel by Deputy FM Ayalon caused opposition leader Tzipi Livni's husband, adman Naftali Schnitzer, to lose contracts in Turkey.

Maariv reported that the Jewish Agency for Israel is looking for young Israelis to help in rescue operations in Haiti. They will receive an open one-year ticket to continue their trip to South America.

HaQaretz reported that yesterday Environmental Protection Minister Gilad Erdan (Likud) claimed that the state is Israel's biggest polluter.

The Jerusalem Post reported that American director James Cameron and actress Jane Fonda denied any connection to a letter calling for a boycott of the Tel Aviv University film festival.

Yediot reported that the American retail garment chains Banana Republic and Old Navy will open stores in Israel.

1. Mideast:

Block Quotes:

1. The Answer to Iran

Prominent liberal author A.B. Yehoshua addresses Iran in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (2/10): By encouraging Hamas' extremism, you [Iran] merely provoke a harsh response from Israel and thereby distance the solution for which we all yearn. Not one single Iranian soldier has ever shed his blood for our people the way the soldiers of Egypt and Jordan did, yet these countries later signed peace agreements with Israel. Peace between Israel and Palestine would neutralize the poisonous sting of Iran's hatred for Israel and shatter the political-imaginative mechanism that makes it see Israel as the little Satan that must be destroyed at all costs. A joint peace front by Israelis and Palestinians could cause the Iranian people to recoil from the madness that has taken over the religious leadership of this great and honored nation. Therefore, the end of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would have a much greater impact than any Israeli or American military operation. That would only perpetuate this region's pain and suffering.

II. Barak Can Do It Too

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz (2/10): Netanyahu [recently] slipped back into his old image, the pressured and sweaty one, while [Ehud] Barak displayed self-control and restraint -- precisely the qualities the public wants for the hand on the red button.... Barak's aspirations are based on two models. One is Yitzhak Rabin, who used his term as defense minister to correct his image as a weak prime minister and return to the helm as the national savior. The other is none other than Netanyahu, who received a divided and fractured Likud in 2006 and came back with it to government in 2009. Barak believes that if they succeeded, so can he. His chances depend on how the security situation plays out. If there is a national crisis, Barak could be called on to take over because of his experience and composure. An unsuccessful war could gravely damage his career, as happened to Moshe Dayan and Amir Peretz, and to Barak himself in the second intifada. During the Olmert period, Barak tried to moderate the prime minister's aggression, to delay or shorten military operations. His critics say he feared that Olmert would take all the credit. Will Barak behave the same way when Netanyahu brings the Iranian bomb issue up for a decision? Will he manage to leverage the crisis to his own advantage and come back to the leadership in a big way?

III. QA Price without Anything in Exchange

Conservative columnist Amos Carmel wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (2/10): QThe angry Syrian response to [Foreign Minister Avigdor LiebermanQs] threat illustrated an old truth: it has become completely clear that Syria has an obvious price-tag for any peace treaty with Israel. But the geopolitical significance of any such agreement is rather dubious.... There is no hint that Syria will disengage from Iran, Hamas, or Hizbullah. There is no indication of an expected strategic change in the region Q- only a clear and dangerous required price.

IV. QUnsolved Riddle

Columnist Avraham Tirosh wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (2/10): QTo all political camps, Bibi is an unsolved riddle. It not clear until today Q one year after his election Q what is his real view about peace and the territories. What is clear is that he is afraid of the shadow of his coalition partners. His image as prime minister that he has a stable, safe coalition is no more than a folk-tale nurtured by his entourage. Netanyahu is crippled and unable to act against Foreign Minister Lieberman when necessary and in the right amount. He is also powerless against Ehud BarakQs moves, although the possibility of the latterQs leaving the government with the small remainder of his party is distant, even impossible.

IV. QAway with Campus Timidity

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (2/10): QCampuses have never been bastions of pro-Israelism. In the 21st century a difficult campus situation got even worse, partly due to an influx of Muslim students and the affinity of the anti-globalization movement for the Palestinian cause. None of this absolves the current cadre of Jewish student activists from stepping up to the plate. The Twitter generation even has the advantage of circumventing the silencing of Israel by utilizing new media. Never has it been more important to cast timidity aside. To reassert that no one has a stronger claim to this land than the Jewish people; to denounce the notion that IsraelQs Qoriginal sinQ was being re-born after 2000 years; and to explain that the QoccupationQ and settlements are fundamentally red-herring issues that would fade away, were the Palestinians to negotiate in earnest for a two-state solution.

12. Iran:

Block Quotes:

QThis Is the Time to Press

Intelligence affairs writer and television anchor Ronen Bergman opined in the mass-circulation pluralist Yediot Aharonot (2/10): QThe self-evident reason [to pressure Iran now]: the Iranians are accelerating. IranQs nuclear project is advancing in measured steps, not huge steps, but confidently, and it is moving ahead at a reasonable pace. Another reason for adopting a tougher line can be found in the relationship between the German Chancellor and the French President, both of whom hold a strong position against Iran, which leads to willingness for significant sanctions. A third reason: ObamaQs failure and success. Upon his election, the U.S. President wanted to prove to the Arab world and to liberal Europe that he had tried to talk to the Iranians and exhausted all diplomatic options before the sanctions. The Iranians, however, thumbed their nose at him and used all possible stalling and deception tactics. Their conduct is greatly helping the administration today in recruiting additional countries for the boycott. A fourth reason: The rapprochement between the US and Russia. Israel will wait to see if there are more sanctions, what they consist of, and how they will affect Iran. In order to prevent the bombing of the nuclear facilities, there is no need to apply pressure to Israel. Only imposing effective sanctions on Iran will make it clear to the regime of the ayatollahs that continuing the nuclear project will endanger its very existence.

